

AMENDMENTS TO CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Previously Presented) A method of manufacturing an item of build-to-order equipment having at least one hardware component bearing a unique identifier ("component ID") in software readable form, comprising:
 - generating a digital identifier ("system trackcode") which defines the hardware and software configuration of the item;
 - storing the system trackcode in association with the component ID in a non-specific external storage medium such that the component ID can be used as a key to retrieve the associated system trackcode; and
 - at least at one stage of manufacture reading the component ID from the one component and using it to retrieve the associated system trackcode from the external storage medium.
2. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising:
 - storing the retrieved system trackcode in software readable form in a hardware component of the item.
3. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 2, wherein the hardware component in which the retrieved system trackcode is stored in the same hardware component as that bearing the component ID.
4. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 2, further comprising:
 - reading the stored system trackcode from the hardware component during at least one subsequent stage of manufacture.
5. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 2, further comprising:
 - generating at least at one stage of manufacture a further identifier ("hardware signature") uniquely related to a particular set of hardware components then incorporated in the item; and
 - storing the hardware signature in association with the system trackcode in the non-specific external storage medium.

6. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 5, further comprising:
generating at least at one further stage of manufacture a current hardware signature; and
comparing the current hardware signature with the previously stored hardware signature to detect any change in hardware components between the two manufacturing stages.
7. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 2, wherein the item of build-to-order equipment is a PC system unit.
8. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 7, wherein the hardware component bearing a unique identifier is the PC system unit's motherboard.
9. (Currently Amended) A method of building an information handling system (IHS) to conform to a custom order comprising:
deriving a system trackcode from a custom order;
scanning a hardware component to derive a component identifier;
associating the system trackcode with the component identifier in a database;
powering up the IHS after building the IHS;
retrieving the component identifier and the system trackcode by means of manufacturing software;
writing the system trackcode to a CMOS in the IHS; and
the manufacturing software thereafter reading the system trackcode from the IHS;
generating a unique identifier (HW SIG) associated with the trackcode.
retrieving the trackcode from the database;
generating a current (HW SIG) to the database;
during subsequent power ups, retrieving the trackcode and the current (HW SIG);
retrieving the unique identifier (HW SIG) from the database using the trackcode;
and
comparing the unique identifier (HW SIG) against the current (HW SIG).
10. – 13. (Canceled)
14. (Currently Amended) The method of ~~claim 13~~ claim 9, further comprising:

PATENT

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in the event of a mismatch between both of the (HW SIG's), halting manufacturing of the IHS.